by 100 %, reflects the second laser beam approximately by 50 %, and permeates it approximately by 50 %.

- - REMARKS - -

Claims 1-8 are pending in the application. Claims 2 and 4 have been cancelled. Claims 1 and 3 have been rewritten. The changes to the rewritten claims from the previous versions to the rewritten versions are shown in Appendix A (attached hereto as Tab A), with brackets for deleted matter and underlines for added matter. No new matter has been added as a result of this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, the claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,163,409 to Uchiyama et al. ("Uchiyama") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,696,749 to Brazas, Jr. et al. ("Brazas"). The rejections are respectfully traversed. The claims have nevertheless been amended to clarify the invention and to eliminate any ambiguity that may have been the basis for the rejections. In particular, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of dependent claim 2. Claim 1 has also been amended to further define the wavelength separating layer.

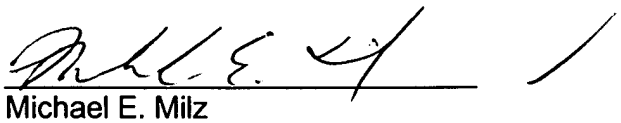
As amended, independent claim 1 is directed to an optical pickup comprising a light-emitting part having a plurality of light sources that emit a laser beam of first wavelength and a laser beam of a second wavelength having optical axes that are mutually parallel with a specific distance, a light-receiving member having a light-receiving element, and a beam splitter that admits each of the laser beams, delivers each of the laser beams toward optical disks, and guides return beams from the optical disks toward the light-receiving member where the light-receiving element receives the return beams. In addition, the beam splitter is provided with a wavelength-separating layer that is formed such that a reflecting position of the laser beam of first wavelength at the first interface and a delivering position of the laser beam of second wavelength are set at the same positions, the optical axes of the respective laser beams are coincident to each other, and each of the laser beams is delivered from the beam splitter so as to cause the return beams to permeate through the wavelength separating layer and to be guided toward the light-receiving member. These limitations and features are neither disclosed nor suggested by the prior art.

Uchiyama and Brazas appear to disclose optical disk apparatus in which laser beams having different wavelengths are applied, and a return beam fed from the disk is guided to an optical detector through a beam splitter. However, neither of these references disclose or suggest the limitations of claim 1 that require that the optical axes of the respective laser beams outputted from the beam splitter are coincident with each other, and that the laser beams are received at the light-receiving element while the optical axes of the return beams are also coincident with each other. For example, in the detector array 68 sown in FIGS. 9-11 of Brazas, spot positions are made different for every wavelength, and thus, the light-receiving elements for receiving each of the lights of different wavelengths are made different from each other. In other words, the optical axes are not coincident to each other. Independent claim 1 is therefore not rendered unpatentable by these references, either alone or in combination.

The remaining claims are each dependent on claim 1, and are therefore patentable for the same reasons that claim 1 is described above as patentable. It is therefore unnecessary to discuss the additional distinctions between these dependent claims and the prior art.

Applicant has made a novel and nonobvious contribution to the art of optical pickup devices. The pending claims are believed to truly distinguish over the prior art and to be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, such allowance is now earnestly requested. If for any reason the Examiner is not able to allow the application, he is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4273.

Respectfully submitted,



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Appendix A

In the Claims:

Please amend claims 1 and 3 as follows:

1. (Amended) An optical pickup comprising:

a light-emitting part having a plurality of light sources that emit a laser beam[s] of first wavelength and a laser beam of a second wavelength having [which wavelengths are different and] optical axes that are mutually parallel with a specific distance;

a light-receiving member having a light-receiving element; and

a beam splitter that admits each of the laser beams, delivers each of the laser beams toward optical disks, and guides return beams from the optical disks toward the light-receiving member where the light-receiving element receives the return beams, wherein:

the beam splitter is provided with a wavelength-separating layer, the wavelength-separating layer [is] being comprised of [two interfaces and] a medium having a first interface and a second interface, placed between the interfaces and having a specific refractive index, [placed between the interfaces, or more than three interfaces and media each having specific refractive indexes, placed between the interfaces,] the first and second interfaces each having a first and a second wavelength selecting film formed thereon, which reflect or permeate the first and second wavelength laser beams each by specified rates;

the first interface reflects the laser beam of first wavelength and permeates the laser beam of second wavelength;

the second interface reflects the laser beam of second wavelength; and

the first and second interfaces permeate the laser beams of first and second wavelengths, with respect to the return beams; and further wherein

the wavelength separating layer is formed such that a reflecting position of the laser beam of first wavelength at the first interface and a delivering position of the laser beam of second wavelength are set at the same positions, the optical axes of the respective laser beams are coincident to each other, and each of the laser beams is

delivered from the beam splitter [reflects or permeates the laser beams at or through the interfaces, brings the optical axes of the laser beams after reflection into coincidence, delivers the laser beams out of the beam splitter, and] so as to cause [permeates] the return beams to permeate through the wavelength[-] separating layer and to be guided [them] toward the light-receiving member.

3. (Amended) An optical pickup according to Claim [2] 1, wherein the first wavelength selecting film reflects the first laser beam approximately by 50 %, permeates it approximately by 50 %, and permeates the second laser beam almost by 100 %, and the second wavelength selecting film permeates the first laser beam almost by 100 %, reflects the second laser beam approximately by 50 %, and permeates it approximately by 50 %.